

The University of Chicago

# SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION IN CHICAGO

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE  
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR  
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1937

By  
HENRY EVERT DEWEY

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Reprinted from  
THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL  
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# School Administration in Chicago

By H. E. Dewey, Ph.D.

*(Reprinted from the February, May, and July, 1938, issues of The American School Board Journal)*



# School Administration in Chicago: 1890 to 1924

H. E. Dewey, Ph.D.

Beginning about 1890 the Chicago school system was deluged by a great wave of adverse criticism. In the press and elsewhere objections were raised to the teaching of "fads and frills," to the incompetence of the teachers, to the hampering of the school system by city politicians, and to the overcrowded condition of the school buildings.

Chicago had just annexed large areas around the original city and had become a metropolis of over one million people. The school system was striving to take care of 135,000 school children. The board of education of 21 members was paying rent for 174 stores and other buildings in which to house 23,000 children, many of whom were attending school for only half the day. The city was paying interest on a two-million-dollar bond issue, and was spending less than \$25 per capita for public education.

In his annual report for 1892-1893, John McLaren, president of the Chicago board of education, warned the city that "the tendency is growing toward the exercise of political influence in the management of our schools."<sup>2</sup> The warning was repeated the next year by McLaren's successor. "There are men in the board," he said, "who have strong political convictions and ardently espouse the cause of their respective parties outside of and beyond the board of education."<sup>3</sup>

After George Howland resigned the superintendency of the Chicago schools in 1891, Albert G. Lane carried on for a period of seven years in the midst of constant turmoil and bitter criticism of the schools, while E. Benjamin Andrews lasted only two years (1898-1900) and accumulated little but grief. Apparently the sudden transition of Chicago from an overgrown village to one of the nation's largest cities brought with it a disquieting wave of criticism in which the relations between the board of education and the superintendent were anything but satisfactory.

The last decade of the nineteenth century was one in which the board was setting up administrative machinery one year and tearing it down the next. There was resistance to the attempt to interfere with the traditional prerogatives of committee administration, yet a feeling on the part of some of the board members that more responsibility should be placed on the employed professional officials, of whom, of course, the superintendent was chief.

The educational staff was reorganized in 1890 to provide eight assistant superin-

tendents, a superintendent of compulsory attendance, supervisors of evening schools and of German, and the numerous school principals.<sup>4</sup> The assistant superintendents were really district superintendents, for seven of them were assigned to the seven districts of the city, and the eighth acted as superintendent of high schools. The assistants were responsible to the superintendent, but were also made responsible to the board's committee on school management and on occasion to other standing committees. This dual responsibility added to the confusion and increased the possibilities of friction between the professional and lay officers.

## The Cooley Administration

In 1896 the board unanimously approved a resolution giving the superintendent power to nominate all persons for employment in the education department, with due regard to the list of eligibles.<sup>5</sup> Six years later the board acted to require nomination of assistant superintendents by the superintendent before their election by the board.<sup>6</sup> The assistants met frequently with the superintendent, and the group soon became known as the "board of superintendents." These reforms were in line with similar developments in other large cities, but in Chicago they only increased the impact of political animosities.

When Edwin G. Cooley became superintendent in 1901, an "era of good feeling" was anticipated, but it never materialized. After his first year in office, Cooley was re-elected for a five-year term, and the board showed repeatedly its confidence in him by extending his powers.

The so-called Dawes rule had been passed in 1900. This rule carefully circumscribed the authority of the superintendent in appointing teachers, required the filing of all papers referring to appointment, transfer, or promotion of teachers in the superintendent's office, abolished all influence of district committees in teaching appointments, prohibited board members from recommending candidates to the superintendent, and permitted changes in the teaching staff only on written recommendation of the superintendent. It was a good rule, but it also proved to be a good weapon in the hands of a politically appointed board which was antagonistic to Cooley.

In 1903, the superintendent was publicly accused of violating the Dawes rule. He was told that many of those seeking appointment to teaching positions were con-

fident their political pull would get them into the schools in spite of the rule.

Cooley replied to this charge by throwing open the school records and stating that, although the burden of correspondence was heavy, he had given only that consideration to all applicants to which they were entitled under the rules. No further charges were made, but the suspicion remained. It clouded the rest of Cooley's administration, but to this day there is no evidence that he evaded the Dawes rule in any of his appointments.

When Mayor Dunne was succeeded in 1907 by Mayor Busse, the latter was advised by counsel that he could remove or appoint board members as he wished. He took action on this advice at once, removing eight members and causing the resignation of five more. The term of office of none of those removed had expired, and the general policy of the majority of the new board was to oppose the former "Dunne" board on every issue.

Strongly partisan, the new board lost no time in attacking the professional staff. Otto C. Schneider, president of the new board, called attention to the failure of the business and education departments to co-operate with each other, the refusal of the education department to accept the board committee's choice of sites for new buildings, the chaotic and individualistic curriculum of the schools, and the apparent efforts to reduce the number of pupils taking German.<sup>7</sup> He objected that the board could not vote intelligently on measures submitted to it by the board of superintendents, which met secretly, and which he accused of attempting to set itself up as an "inner board of education."<sup>8</sup>

The action of Mayor Busse in removing board members was ruled illegal by the Supreme Court of Illinois in December, 1908, and the right of the mayor to remove members during their terms of office was denied.<sup>9</sup> Before the decision could be made effective, however, Mr. Cooley had resigned, with the statement: "I believe that the labor and worries involved in my present position will soon undermine my health and force me out permanently."<sup>10</sup>

The forced resignation of Cooley was a direct outcome of the change in city administration. It was also a clear indication of the unwillingness of the board to delegate responsibility to its own professional staff. The struggle between Cooley and the

<sup>7</sup>At this time, German was an optional subject in the elementary schools.

<sup>8</sup>Annual Report, Chicago Board of Education, 1907-1908, pp. 13-16.

<sup>9</sup>Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, Jan. 15, 1908, pp. 398-400.

<sup>10</sup>Annual Report, Chicago Board of Education, 1908-1909, p. 176.

<sup>1</sup>Emporia, Kansas.

<sup>2</sup>Annual Report, Board of Education, Chicago Public Schools, 1892-1893, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 1893-1894, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 1889-1890, p. 226.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, 1895-1896, pp. 33, 34.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 1903-1904, p. 3.



board had two important outcomes: First, the term of office of the superintendent was reduced from five years to one year; second, a change in the administrative plan was made, in 1910, under which the superintendent's office was made relatively subordinate to that of the secretary of the board.

### Mrs. Young's Superintendency

Probably no superintendent in the history of the Chicago schools had better qualifications for the arduous position as chief executive of the schools than did Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, who was appointed soon after Cooley's resignation. Mrs. Young had begun her service as a Chicago teacher in 1862, and had been appointed assistant superintendent in 1887. Her disapproval of the policy of Superintendent Andrews led to her resignation in 1899, but in 1905 she returned to the schools as principal of the Chicago Normal School. During the six years following her resignation from the school service she had been affiliated with John Dewey at the University of Chicago and had earned the degree of doctor of philosophy.

Because of her long experience in the Chicago schools, the new superintendent had been in a position to observe the growing antagonism of independent teachers' organizations toward the board of education. She believed that the ideas of the classroom teacher should have respectful consideration in the determination of administrative policies, and to bring this about she reorganized the teachers' councils which had led a precarious existence since 1899. The board approved these councils, probably with the hope that as a sort of "company union," they might help to offset the tendency of the teachers' organizations to affiliate with organized labor. This pious hope was not realized, and probably will not be so long as the city government maintains its hold upon the school system.<sup>11</sup>

Mayor Harrison succeeded Mayor Busse, and evaded the intent of the law by requiring board members to give him their resignations upon appointment, to be put into effect at the mayor's pleasure. In 1910, the secretary of the board was placed in full charge of all business affairs, becoming the manager of six bureaus. Two years later the secretary was given charge of two more bureaus. The avowed purpose of these changes was to permit the superintendent to be unhampered in her control of the education department, but, as it worked out, the result was to separate the two departments and to make co-operation between them virtually impossible. The secretary became to all intents and purposes the real administrative head of the system.

Mrs. Young was soon caught in a mael-

strom. Board members attempted to influence her in her choice of textbooks. She was beset on the one side by teachers' organizations with labor affiliations, on the other side by board members who were determined to destroy these unions. Through an obvious manipulation of finances, an attempt was made to show a deficit in the education department, while the administrative department absorbed the major part of the funds available. When she opposed a reduction in teachers' salaries, she was accused of aiding the labor organizations. There were charges of speculation in the purchase of school sites. Mrs. Young was even attacked for allowing her religion to influence her appointments and decisions, a trumped-up charge for which there was transparently no foundation. Finally, in July, 1913, she submitted her resignation.

The mayor, favoring Mrs. Young's retention, compelled the resignation of four members of the board, and the reconstituted board persuaded Mrs. Young to withdraw her resignation and continue in office. She continued to serve, but was rather suddenly forced out by a hostile board two years later.

The matter of board appointments was carried into the courts, and the state supreme court reinstated the deposed members, denying the right of the mayor to appoint members with the provision that on appointment their resignations should be in the hands of the mayor.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of the difficulties of her position, Mrs. Young succeeded in developing more adequate facilities for educational administration. She was instrumental in establishing the position of district superintendent as distinct from that of assistant superintendent. Each district superintendent had under his supervision two high schools and from 25 to 30 elementary schools, with a total enrollment ranging from 25,000 to 30,000.<sup>13</sup> In line with her belief in the distribution of administrative responsibility, she initiated the policy, since maintained, which made the 18 high school and 260 elementary principals responsible authorities in their own buildings. Throughout her administration she had the good will and co-operation of the teaching staff and of disinterested citizens. There is no evidence that the opposition to her was in any way based upon her lack of ability as an administrator. She was, like other Chicago superintendents, the victim of a political machine which had no interest in the improvement of the school system.

### The Loeb Rule

William Hale Thompson was elected mayor for the first time in 1915, and Mr. John D. Shoup, upon Mrs. Young's retirement, was appointed superintendent. Under him matters drifted from bad to worse.

Dissatisfaction with the administration became so widespread that the city council in 1916 authorized a committee to "make a thorough investigation into the causes, methods of adoption, purposes and results of the so-called Loeb rules adopted by the Board of Education, and to investigate the actions of the Board of Education and other bodies or persons contributing to, or responsible for, the present disorganization in the management of the schools."<sup>14</sup>

The Loeb rule of 1915 grew directly out of the serious breach which had been allowed to develop between a large body of determined teachers and the politically dominated lay administration. The Teachers' Federation had fought the board persistently and with considerable success since 1900. One of its major successes had been the enactment of a law guaranteeing permanent tenure to teachers, which prevented the board from dropping teachers at the end of each year without cause. The Federation had also won a battle to secure more honest assessment and collection of taxes, and to prevent tax dodging by large corporations. The Loeb rule struck back at the teachers by attempting to prohibit them from belonging to labor unions or organizations affiliated with trade unions.

A storm of protest poured in from labor unions and from teachers who belonged to the Federation. The teachers succeeded in securing an injunction writ from the Superior Court of Cook County, restraining the board from carrying out the provisions of the rule, or taking any action under it.<sup>15</sup>

While the battle raged, a nonpartisan commission held hearings, calling in educational experts to advise as to what legislation might be required. The result was a new enabling law, usually referred to as the Otis Law, which became effective April 20, 1917.

### The Otis Law

The Otis Law reduced the membership of the board to eleven, established the superintendency as a statutory office with a four-year term, and was designed to protect the department of education against interference from individual board members or city politicians. But the ways of the politician are devious, and the law has never fulfilled its promise.

Under the law, the mayor was given no power over the school system except that of appointing members to the board, with the consent of the city council for a five-year term. But Mayor Thompson conceived of his duties and his position as implying much more than this. He attempted to evade the Otis Law as soon as it was supposed to become effective.

On April 23, 1917, he appointed two board members, Jacob Loeb and Mrs. Frances E. Thornton, for a five-year term each. Both Mr. Loeb and Mrs. Thornton had belonged to

<sup>11</sup>Unions of teachers are active in Chicago schools in 1938. Among other things they are attempting to rid the schools of political influences.

<sup>12</sup>Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, March 4, 1915, pp. 917-923.

<sup>13</sup>Annual Report, Chicago Board of Education, 1912-1913, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Report of Committee of City Council, on Fire, Police, and Civil Service. Chicago: Barnard and Miller, 1916.

<sup>15</sup>Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, Sept. 29, 1915, p. 888.



the board before adoption of the Otis Law. Their appointments were approved by the city council, and they began to serve as members of the old board of nineteen remaining members, pending the reorganization by which the board was to be reduced to eleven members.

In late May and early June, Mayor Thompson appointed nine more members. On June 18, the city council approved these appointments, but on June 22 they moved to reconsider and rejected them. Asked for an opinion as to the legality of this board, the state's attorney ruled that the board was legal because, according to the Otis Law, the old members were to hold office only until the new board was qualified.<sup>16</sup> Donald R. Richberg, special attorney for the city council, was of the same opinion, arguing that the old board had no right to continue, since the new board was a duly constituted body politic and corporate under the Otis Law. He contended that the city council could not reconsider its approval after the new members were duly qualified. These members could not be interfered with before the expiration of their terms of office.<sup>17</sup>

These were, of course, only opinions, but as such they seemed to justify the assumption of control of the newly appointed members. In fact, when the case was appealed to the circuit court, Judge Walker upheld the opinions of the state's attorney and corporation counsel, asserting that the city council could not reconsider its action in ratifying the mayor's appointments. All acts of the new board were declared to be legal and binding, the old body having been a city department and not a body politic and corporate.<sup>18</sup>

Again the case was appealed, but the new board continued in control until June, 1918, when a supreme court decision reversed the previous ruling and by law the old board of twenty-one members came back into control.<sup>19</sup> The circuit court entered a judgment of ouster against the Thompson appointees, the judgment of the circuit and appellate courts was reversed, and the right of the city council to reconsider the approval of appointees was upheld.<sup>20</sup> By this action all appointments of the new board were held illegal, including that of an attorney, a business manager, and a secretary.

Mayor Thompson's previous appointments having been thus repudiated, he again appointed a board of eleven members in October, 1918. Mrs. Thornton and Mr. Loeb were left off the list this time, and they immediately protested, claiming that they possessed the right of membership for the five-year term beginning in 1917. Since Mayor Thompson had appointed eleven members for only nine vacancies, the judge of the circuit court and Levy Mayer, attorney, ruled the new appointments illegal and left the old board in control once more.<sup>21</sup>

The next attempt to reorganize the board was made in May, 1919. Eleven members were again appointed. These organized and refused to recognize the old board and its appointment of a superintendent to replace John D. Shoup, who had died. Mr. Loeb was again left off the list, the case again went to the circuit court, and once more the eleven

new members were declared to be an illegal body.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, on October 20, 1919, just two years and a half after the date on which the Otis Law was to go into effect, a legal board was organized by the appointment of nine new members to serve with Mr. Loeb and Mrs. Thornton.<sup>23</sup> One can easily imagine the effect which this long, acrimonious, publicized battle had on the morale of the professional staff, the teachers, and the pupils of the Chicago school system.

### The Chadsey Incident

In the meantime the superintendency had become an issue; in fact, much of Mayor Thompson's concern over the matter was his determination that the old board should not be allowed to bring in an outside man as superintendent. After the death of Superintendent Shoup, in the summer of 1918, the old board, then in control, had appointed a commission of citizens to choose a new superintendent, appointing Principal Peter A. Mortenson to act as superintendent during the interim. After searching the country, this commission recommended the appointment of Dr. Charles E. Chadsey of Detroit, and the board had elected him to the position in March, 1919.

Dr. Chadsey had served little more than two months when the mayor made his second attempt to organize a legal board of education. The board which was organized on May 28, 1919, defied all court decisions, refused to recognize Chadsey's election, locked him out of his office, and elected Mortenson superintendent. Chadsey was permitted to make a statement at this meeting, and entered a vigorous protest, but without result. At the same meeting this board elected a new business manager over the protest of the incumbent, L. E. Larson, and a new attorney in place of A. R. Shannon.<sup>24</sup> In spite of the Otis Law, Mayor Thompson persisted in regarding the school system as a department of the city government, and the case was again taken into the courts.

Finally both the circuit court and the appellate court (November 8 and November 12) rendered a decision that Dr. Chadsey was the real superintendent, the action of the old board being legal, and that he could not be removed from office until his four-year term expired, except after hearing and trial on written charges. The court was severe in its judgment as to the action of the Thompson boards throughout the months that had just passed, and even implied that Mortenson was not without blame, although no criminal activities could be charged against him.

Having lost in the courts, the new Thompson board had recourse to a method of humiliating and setting aside the superintendent which seems to have been a clear violation of the Otis Law, in which the powers of the superintendent were quite definitely described. The rules of the board were so changed as to give Mortenson the real authority which the law had assigned to the superintendent. As associate superintendent Mortenson was to have authority in the choice of textbooks, courses of study; the appointment, promotion and transfer of teachers and all other employees of the education department; and directions for any member of the department, even though they might come from the super-

intendent of schools, were to be transmitted through the associate superintendent.<sup>25</sup>

Thus Dr. Chadsey was left with nothing but an empty title and a salary. He was too conscientious to serve under such circumstances, and three days after this meeting he sent in his resignation. Had he chosen to continue the fight to the bitter end, there is little doubt that Chicago would have had a clearer interpretation of the Otis Law through the courts, than it has to this day.

### Mortenson in Office

Mr. Mortenson served as superintendent from Dec. 17, 1919, to the end of his four-year term in 1923. Without denying that a political machine had put him into office, he declared at once that he was no politician. Although he was vigorously attacked by certain elements of the population, and although his administration was marked by an exposure of corrupt practice, he succeeded in holding the good will of the teaching staff. The teachers' organizations were solidly behind him.

The new superintendent favored junior high schools, attempted to make continuation schools generally available, supported Americanization work, and advocated the expansion of the physical-education department. He proposed an extensive building program, aroused interest in the proposal to erect a new technical high school for girls, recommended a new city college, and worked toward the extension of the normal-school facilities.

Yet in the midst of it all occurred scandalous disclosures of corruption in the school administration. An indictment was brought against the Fitzgerald Boiler Works for conspiracy in dealing with the board in contracts for installing boilers.<sup>26</sup> Payment for the boilers was held up by the board, but before the trial was over other similar scandals were aired, with the result that eleven of the board's employees were indicted, and with them two board members. The president of the board recommended the suspension of the indicted employees, whereupon six members passed their votes and the motion was carried by only three votes. A resolution calling for automatic suspension of any employees indicted by the Grand Jury was referred to the committee on rules.<sup>27</sup> At a previous meeting an attempt to force the indicted employees to resign had failed of passage.<sup>28</sup>

The trial of the indicted men was postponed in November, and the two board members continued to serve against protests from civic and teacher organizations and the newspapers. The engineer-custodians who had been suspended were reinstated pending the outcome of the trial, the same three members who had voted for suspension voting against reinstatement.<sup>29</sup> The trial dragged on for almost a year, two of the engineer-custodians and two of the board members serving jail sentences. But so far as the board was concerned, all charges were finally dropped by unanimous vote, the two engineers who had served sentences for contempt were restored to their positions, and the two board members returned to their seats on the board.<sup>30</sup>

Superintendent Mortenson's four-year term was now drawing to a close, and whether or not he was a mere scapegoat, he probably

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, June 23, 1917, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, June 23, 1917, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 17, 1917, pp. 230, 231.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, Nov. 13, 1918, pp. 14-18.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18 and 21-26.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, Oct. 20, 1919, p. 857.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, May 28, 1919, pp. 6, 7.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, Nov. 25, 1919, p. 994.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 17, 1919, pp. 1049-1051.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, Oct. 11, 1922, pp. 669-671.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, Sept. 27, 1922, p. 617.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, Nov. 22, 1922, p. 794.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 12, 1923, pp. 444, 445.



looked forward to being relieved of his onerous duties. He was still popular with many citizens, for when there was talk of his resigning in 1923, letters came from 6,000 citizens through the National Public School Protective League urging his reappointment, in addition to many similar requests from other organizations.<sup>31</sup> However, Mayor Thompson was defeated in the election of 1923, and Dever, a reform mayor, was elected in his place. It was well known that he would reconstruct the board as rapidly as possible, and in January, 1924, Supt. Mortenson was shelved to make way for a "new deal" for the schools of Chicago.

In the 34-year period ending in 1924, Chicago had had no less than eight superintendents. The school population had more than tripled. There were about 450,000 pupils in

1924, but almost one tenth of them were attending class in portables or rented rooms, or were enrolled in half-day sessions. Because of the pay-as-you-go policy, the building-fund tax rate was increasing rapidly, millions of dollars being spent each year for buildings alone, and other millions for equipment.

In spite of the efforts of the transient superintendents, the teachers' organizations had drifted further and further from any healthy allegiance to the authoritative machinery of the school system, for obvious reasons. During most of this period, because of the constant interference of city-hall politicians, there had developed three separate groups within the school system, usually at cross purposes and pulling against each other in a scramble for rights and privileges: first, the militant teachers' organizations, protected against dismissal and often in a defiant mood, second, the board of education, dominated by the city

administration, constantly changing in membership, and shifting from one position to another as politics might demand; and third, the superintendent of schools, who might succeed for a time, but who was doomed ultimately to fail in all attempts to compromise the growing conflict.

It would be a mistake to conclude that progressive improvement did not take place in many schools through the activities of qualified and conscientious principals and teachers. On the other hand, it is equally clear that the school system as a whole was frequently demoralized by the struggle for supremacy between the city administration, the board of education, and the superintendent and his staff. That the Otis Law failed is a reflection on the imperviousness of the politician to legal restraint, and the indifference of the well-intended citizens of Chicago.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 393.



# School Administration in Chicago, 1924 to 1936<sup>1</sup>

H. E. Dewey, Ph.D.<sup>2</sup>

After more than three decades of instability in school management and corruption in politics, Chicago's ever hopeful citizens looked forward to what promised to be a "reform" city administration under Mayor Dever. For a time it appeared that their hopes were to be realized. Mayor Thompson and his political machine were determined to have a local man in the position of superintendent of schools, but Mayor Dever was in no way committed to this policy.

Consequently, William McAndrew was appointed superintendent on January 9, 1924. At one time he had been a high-school principal in Chicago, but when he was elected he was an assistant superintendent of schools in New York City. He was not the unanimous choice of the board, as one member passed his vote, and another member voted "aye" only after making the reservation that she would prefer a local man.<sup>3</sup>

Superintendent McAndrew opposed the teachers' councils as they had been organized by Mr. Mortenson, his predecessor. His chief objection was that they did not permit principals and other administrative officers to participate in their meetings, but insisted on making their recommendations as bodies of classroom teachers. McAndrew maintained that principals were as truly teachers as any who might work under them. To the charge that teachers were too timid to speak out before principals with their frank opinions he replied that his experience had been quite the other way, and that in any case there was no reason for such timidity.

It is possible that McAndrew might have had his way in this matter if it had not been for the fact that he also opposed the rule of the board which permitted the councils to meet during school hours. Early in his administration he attempted to set aside the board rules by causing their consideration to be deferred from time to time. When in April, 1924, new rules were proposed which set specified meetings during school hours, the report was referred to three committees and the superintendent.<sup>4</sup> After being deferred twice, these rules were placed on file, which meant that, for the time being, they were killed. The superintendent then attempted, without success, to get entire control over the councils.<sup>5</sup> In September, Mr. Coath, a member of the board, quoted the rules in regard to the councils and demanded that the superintendent dismiss schools as provided and

arrange for meetings.<sup>6</sup> Reluctant to intervene, the board tabled the resolution, then referred it to the rules committee.

McAndrew next attempted to get the board to authorize him to offer teachers the free use of the schools after school sessions for meetings with local groups to discuss matters of importance. As a reason for his request he cited the fact that it had even been questioned that the principal had a right to call the teachers in his building together, and urged the need of such conferences.<sup>7</sup> After several postponements this authority was granted, but the teachers hardly regarded this as a satisfactory substitute for the councils.

A year later a definite plan was proposed for revamping the teachers' councils. They were to be organized by the superintendent for the purpose of furnishing him help and advice in maintaining the school service at a high degree of efficiency, the organizations to be in accord with rules and by-laws approved by the superintendent. The membership was to consist of one representative each from the following organizations: Chicago Teachers Federation, Chicago Teachers League, Chicago High-School Teachers Club, Federation of High-School Women Teachers, High-School Federation of Men Teachers, Association of Assistants to Principals, Public-School Kindergarten Association, Manual-Training Teachers Club, Household-Arts Club, Physical-Education Teachers Association, Chicago Truant-Officers Federation, and Chicago Special-Teachers Club. To these twelve members were to be added one elementary principal chosen by the Chicago Principals Club, one high-school principal elected by the principals of all high schools, one district superintendent chosen by his colleagues, and one assistant superintendent similarly chosen. Regular meetings of principals and teachers in their buildings were to constitute the local councils, but the central council as constituted above was to be the contact organization with the administration. The term of office of the central council was to be, eventually, three years. Meetings were to be held on the call of the superintendent.<sup>8</sup>

The strenuous opposition which greeted this plan was a clear indication of the extent to which teachers and administration had drifted apart. The High-School Teachers Council objected and demanded the reestablishment of democratic, universal meetings of teachers without restraint. The Federation of Women High-School Teachers raised the question as to how teachers were to teach democracy to their pupils when autocratic methods were used in the management of teachers. The Federation

of Men Teachers maintained that the very teachers whose professional spirit needed improvement were not members of the organizations to be represented. The result was a deadlock, and the teachers were invited to submit a revised constitution to the board for a final decision.

The constitution was submitted, but since McAndrew would not accept it, councils became a dead issue for the rest of his administration. Agitation continued, however, and the matter of teachers' councils became a political issue when charges were brought against the superintendent in 1927.

The teachers soon found occasion to express their dissatisfaction with many other phases of McAndrew's policy, and whether rightly or wrongly, they developed a tendency to oppose him no matter what he proposed. He was an "outsider" to Chicago and a man of outspoken opinions, although nationally recognized as a progressive educator. Of course, there were exceptions among the teaching body, but in general it is true that all of the opposition to McAndrew did not come from the city administration. Much of it came from the teachers' organizations which had been developing in strength and unity since the beginning of the century.

The first junior high schools in Chicago were organized in 1917, and there was little or no opposition to them at the time. Supt. Mortenson favored their extension, but when Mr. McAndrew proposed to make them an integral part of the school system, after an investigation by a non-partisan commission, he was bitterly opposed by teachers, organized labor, and the city administration. The superintendent succeeded in his fight to include junior high schools in his building program, but they never met with favor among the active and aggressive groups which were antagonistic to him. Finally, during the financial crisis, they were abolished and Chicago returned to the eight-four plan.

When "platoon schools" were suggested as more economical than the double schools so common in Chicago, many objections were raised. The Elementary Teachers Council, representing thirty-nine group councils, went on record against platoon schools, as did the Chicago Teachers Federation. A special educational commission had recommended a few trial schools of this type after visiting platoon schools in other cities.<sup>9</sup> The superintendent made a lengthy report on platoon schools in July, 1924, giving the board the arguments on both sides, but showing quite clearly that he favored them himself.<sup>10</sup> Again he was opposed by the political groups that had fought him on other issues.

<sup>1</sup>In an earlier article ("School Administration in Chicago: 1890 to 1924," *SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL*, February, 1938, p. 42) Chicago's experience in school administration previous to 1924 was reviewed.

<sup>2</sup>Emporia, Kansas.

<sup>3</sup>Proceedings, Board of Education, 1923-1924, p. 393.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, April 23, 1924, pp. 1262, 1263.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 1395-1400.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, Sept. 10, 1924, p. 221.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 769, 770.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, June 25, 1924, p. 57.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, July 9, 1924, pp. 14-20.



Superintendent McAndrew's determination to improve the quality of teaching in the schools was laudable, but at the same time his methods continued to make enemies for him among the teachers. According to the testimony of one of the witnesses at his trial before the board, Mr. McAndrew is reported to have sent out this statement to teachers and principals: "Make it clear to any lagging principals that they are going to put their schools on the required footing or give way to others who can." The required footing, according to this witness, "meant perfection for all pupils in arithmetic, spelling, writing, reading, lettering, handwork and cleanliness, a thing impossible to attain."<sup>11</sup>

Much of this testimony appears to have been doubtful, but McAndrew took vigorous measures to remove incompetent teachers in the only way he could remove them; that is, by suspending them and presenting written charges upon which they were tried before the committee on school administration of the board. In one of his reports McAndrew objected to giving a certain teacher another trial since she had failed to make good in nine different schools, and pointed out that Chicago had too strong a tradition against dismissal. It was inconceivable to him that in a system of about 9,500 teachers none should have been dismissed, during the probationary period of three years, in 1920-21, none out of over ten thousand for the next two years, only one in 1923-24, four in each of the two succeeding years, and only one in 1926-27.<sup>12</sup> Trials of teachers were much more numerous under Superintendent McAndrew than under his predecessors. Probably he was fully justified in the position he took; without a doubt, however, every dismissal made him more enemies among the teachers.

The campaign against McAndrew began to crystallize in 1926 when John English, a board member, presented a resolution calling for a change in the teaching of history in the schools. The resolution stated that because of numerous statements in the public press which charged the minimizing and discrediting of the importance of the role played by certain great Americans in our wars, and the teaching of pacifism, the superintendent should be instructed to make all necessary revisions to accord with a more patriotic policy.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. McAndrew's response to this move was a virtual refusal to take any action, and a defense of the history teaching then carried on in the Chicago schools. The superintendent called together a committee of teachers and superintendents. The committee stated that the history courses were not based on textbooks only, that the teaching was predominantly patriotic, and that the backbone of history courses was to be found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Contributions of citizens of diverse nationalities

were recognized and taught, and the list of books in use was found in progressive schools all over the United States, and endorsed by Catholic dioceses and Lutheran synods.<sup>14</sup>

William Hale Thompson was elected mayor in 1927. He had promised that he would drive McAndrew out of the schools, and was able to appoint four new board members early in his administration.<sup>15</sup> The newspapers were making the most of the sensational charges brought against the superintendent, and Thompson and his allies took full advantage of the situation.

McAndrew was asked to appear before a city council committee to state whether or not he was correctly quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* of April 17, 1927, as follows:

I was brought here specifically to loose the hold that certain outside agencies and the city hall had around the school system. I have loosed that hold and I believe that it will stay loose.<sup>16</sup>

McAndrew naturally refused to appear before the council committee. He reported to the board that he had not made the statement quoted, but that he had stated, before he knew he was being considered for the Chicago superintendency, that he understood Chicago had a poor school system due to a grip of outside interests on the board of education.

J. L. Coath was elected president of the school board by the eight members friendly to Mayor Thompson, all three non-Thompson members voting against him.<sup>17</sup> With his election, a determined effort was made to avoid the adoption of everything McAndrew recommended, and to discredit his entire administration. Brandenburg proposed a resolution protesting against the fact that, as he stated, certain departments were taking action in matters which required board approval and then submitting their reports to get this approval. In a letter to the board, the city council attacked the new salary schedule which McAndrew had drawn up.

On August 3, the board passed a resolution directing the superintendent to place extra teachers (clerical help in the schools) on the civil-service list, or else to return them to instructional duties. Placing extra teachers on the civil-service list would have taken their appointment out of the hands of the superintendent. Dr. McAndrew refused to carry out the direction, and one of the extra teachers, Julia A. Smith, asked for an injunction to restrain the board from carrying out this resolution. McAndrew openly favored her case in court.

At a board meeting held on August 29, Member Brandenburg moved that McAndrew be suspended as recommended by the president of the board, pending trial before the board to be held on September 29.<sup>18</sup> The vote on suspension was six to five, showing the close margin by which Thompson controlled the board.

The charges brought against the super-

intendent and the defense he presented were as follows:

#### Charges

1. That the superintendent had refused to carry out the directions of the resolution of August 3, putting extra teachers under civil service, or else returning them to instructional duties.

2. Entered into conspiracy with U. A. Lavery, attorney for the mother of one of the extra teachers to defeat the resolution by court action.

3. Civil-service commission and attorney of the board had both ruled that extra teachers belonged under civil service. Therefore, the resolution was legal.

4. The superintendent is the executive officer of the board and as such is bound to carry out its instructions without question.

5. The superintendent, though a defendant in the case, stated before the judge that he believed Julia A. Smith was entitled to the relief asked.

#### Defense

1. Impossible, since extra teachers were already performing instructional duties as well as clerical. Classed properly as teachers who are exempt from civil service.

2. Admits opening the records and giving information to Lavery and the mother of Julia A. Smith, but had no authority to withhold the information. Had nothing to do with initiating the case, but expressed himself as favorable to the elimination of the resolution, about which he was not consulted.

3. Supreme Court had decided that teachers are exempt from civil service and extra teachers are teachers and not clerks.

4. Otis Law gives superintendent certain rights with which even the board may not interfere, in the educational department. Four ex-presidents have admitted this and lived up to it.

5. Admits this and still holds this view.<sup>19</sup>

The Otis Law permitted suspension of the superintendent, and by continuing the hearing from meeting to meeting the board managed to prevent McAndrew's carrying out his duties for six months. New evidence was introduced to bolster up the case, and the final summary was not made until March, 1928, after McAndrew's four-year term had expired.<sup>20</sup> During the later hearings, McAndrew, pronouncing the whole procedure a farce, stayed away from the meetings and was defended by counsel. Naturally, the board took advantage of this fact in the public press, and continued to pile up evidence at each succeeding meeting.

The charge which created national interest in the case was connected with the superintendent's supposed pro-British activities. After considerable newspaper airing this charge was formally presented at the meeting of September 29, 1927. Dr. McAndrew was accused of recommending and causing pro-British textbooks to be introduced into the schools, as an agent of the English Speaking Union; of causing to be removed from the school walls of certain buildings pictures of "The Spirit of '76" and "Old Ironsides," and of denouncing them as bloody and repulsive war suggestions in the magazine which he edited (*Educational Review*); of refusing to support or carry out a collection in the schools for the purpose of preserving "Old Ironsides"; of entering into unlawful conspiracy with C. E. Merriam and C. H. Judd to cause pro-British and un-American instruction to be given Chicago teachers.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, March 14, 1928, p. 955 et seq.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, March 23, 1927, p. 1326.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1926, p. 1167.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, March 23, 1927, pp. 1328, 1329.

<sup>15</sup>J. L. Coath, W. H. Brandenburg, J. A. Hemingway, and Oscar Durante.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, Jan. 26, 1927, p. 1511.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, May 25, 1927, p. 1591.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1927, pp. 214-218.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1927, pp. 214-218.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, March 14, 1928, pp. 955-978.



McAndrew had answered these charges before they were formally made, and the futility of any further defense was apparent. Two years later, John J. Gorman, one of the principal witnesses, retracted the statements he had made about one of the textbooks (*Muzzey*), stated that he had not read the book, and wrote an apology to the author. The board of education then adopted a resolution apologizing not only to Mr. Muzzey, but to McAndrew, C. H. Judd, and C. E. Merriam. This resolution stated that McAndrew probably would not have been declared guilty without Gorman's testimony.<sup>21</sup>

Most of the other charges were of purely local interest. McAndrew was accused of insubordination, an insolent and domineering attitude toward the board members, refusal to call meetings of the teachers' councils, refusal to withdraw textbooks from which the staff were getting profits, transferring a teacher in violation of the board's instructions, absenting himself from duty to deliver lectures, putting himself under obligations to certain publishers by editing their publications, interfering with the schools by a rigid testing program of his own device, and employment of persons under the guise of members of the teaching force for clerical work in the schools.<sup>22</sup>

The trial indicated how easy it is to find witnesses who have a real or fancied grievance against any man in a position of public responsibility. McAndrew was "accused" of demanding 100 per cent accuracy in the schools, and of threatening to get rid of principals who could not meet these standards. The testimony showed that some of the principals regarded this as a savage attack on the professional ethics of the teaching force, and it was implied that some principals had resorted to methods of doubtful honesty in order to meet McAndrew's requirements. One teacher went so far as to say that teaching during McAndrew's administration was what Sherman said war was.

McAndrew was attempting to increase the efficiency of teaching in the schools, and it might be questioned whether he had used the best methods to get these results. On the whole the charges were petty and political, and the real issue was whether or not under the Otis Law the board had a right to interfere with the education department and its administration after a superintendent had once been chosen. Since no court action was taken against McAndrew or on his behalf with respect to this issue, this question must still be regarded as legally unsettled, and until it is settled there is apparently no way to prevent political interference with the administration of the schools.

William J. Bogan had been acting superintendent during the trial of McAndrew, and he was elected McAndrew's successor in June, 1928. Having been teacher, principal, and assistant superintendent in the Chicago school system, Mr. Bogan was regarded with favor by the political powers, and there was at first relatively little political interference with his administration. During the summer he worked out his program for the schools. All of his recommendations were adopted at a meeting in August. He made a statement at this meeting thanking the board for taking the schools out of politics, and promising that he intended to keep them out. One member of the board stated that he believed Mr. Bogan's election unanimously, without any pressure from the politicians, was the first case of the kind on record.<sup>23</sup>

The tradition that the schools are still subject to political domination would not down, however. Judge Swanson conducted an investigation into school "graft" in the business department in 1929, the board adopting a resolution to support him, and commending him for his promptness and diligence.<sup>24</sup> Ernest C. Withall, the business manager, resigned under fire in 1932, because of his political activities. The board attempted to divest the attorney of his authority under the Otis Law by assigning his duties to two assistants, but a supreme court decision in 1931 asserted that the board had a right to disapprove or to refuse to concur with the attorney's action, but had no right to prescribe and determine the duties of employees in the attorney's office, since these were established by the Otis Law.<sup>25</sup>

Following the revelation of faulty construction in the erection of 32 buildings in 1929, the board took action to investigate the matter. Twenty-six buildings were inspected by L. E. Ritter, I. F. Stern, and R. W. Hunt & Co., engineers. They reported that the structural design was faulty, that inaccuracies in calculations had been made, that there had been deviations from specifications, and that some of the schools were in a dangerous condition.<sup>26</sup> Later reports indicated that even after repairs were made the buildings would not be 100 per cent perfect, rapid deterioration being under way.<sup>27</sup> The board took action to proceed with repairs. Contractors answered the charges by claiming that atmospheric conditions and faulty specifications were responsible for the defects, and objected to the fact that the investigation was being carried out secretly.<sup>28</sup> Prosecution of the contractors was threatened, but never instituted, and ultimately the board spent nearly \$700,000 in making some, but not all of the repairs recommended by the engineers.<sup>29</sup>

Until the 1927 quadrennial assessment was rejected by the Illinois State Tax Commission, there was no serious indebtedness against the Chicago school system. With the failure of the tax system to produce revenue in 1928, 1929, and 1930, the only resource of the board was emergency legislation to enable the meeting of charges against instruction and capital outlay for new buildings. The legislation was secured, but in such form that the piling up of a new indebtedness was unavoidable. The tax-anticipation warrants and bonds issued after 1929, added to the failure of tax resources, led to the accumulation of unpaid liabilities against the board of \$134,111,194 by 1931.<sup>30</sup> The debt service charge became approximately \$11,000,000 in 1932, whereas in 1917 it had been only \$48,641.

In spite of all its efforts, the board was finally placed in a position in which it could not pay the teachers, business department employees, vendors, or building contractors, and the credit of the school system was seriously impaired. Loans from local banks were negotiated, special forms of scrip of uncertain value were issued, and tax warrants began to depreciate in value.

The breakdown of the tax system was a matter over which the school board had no control, but the failure of the school authorities to adopt a thorough retrenchment program was severely criticized.

An advisory committee chosen by the superintendent recommended that the schools be closed

outright for one month, and that many unimportant educational activities be eliminated. The board refused to take this action. The board later agreed to co-operate with a citizen's committee organized to recommend economy procedures and financial policies for the consideration of governmental agencies in Cook County, but no permanent improvement in the situation resulted from these deliberations. In 1931, A. J. Cermak, elected mayor on the promise that he would reduce the school board's budget, charged the board with not making any genuine effort to reduce expenditures, declared his inability, under the law, to appoint enough members to the board to control it, and refused any further co-operation. The board stood pat on a \$90,000,000 budget, which it had adopted after numerous hearings by a vote of eight to three.

The city council had no authority under the Otis Law to reject the budget, but by delaying its approval from meeting to meeting it was able to arouse public sentiment to such an extent that finally the board substituted a budget calling for about \$60,000,000. During the intervening two years the teachers and other employees had continued to serve without pay except for intermittent fragmentary portions.

Space limitations prohibit any detailed account of the school situation during the prolonged financial depression. The struggle to maintain the morale of the teachers is so recent as to be all too easily recalled by the present teaching staff in Chicago. Worn out by difficulties for which he was in no way responsible, Superintendent Bogan died in 1936, and was succeeded by W. H. Johnson, the present superintendent.

With all due respect for the manner in which Dr. McAndrew and Mr. Bogan fought against the political powers, and attempted to establish improved conditions in the schools of Chicago, they failed. The two men present interesting contrasts: McAndrew fought in the open and showed an uncompromising attitude which created antagonisms. Bogan, a local man, was mild and conciliatory, popular with the teachers, progressive in outlook, but not afraid to oppose any evil when occasion arose. Neither man succeeded in overcoming the political tradition that took firm hold of the Chicago schools in 1890. Perhaps the accomplishment of this end is too much to expect of a human being.

The Chicago school system by 1929 had become the greatest single business enterprise in the city, with a budget peak of nearly one hundred million dollars, employing fourteen thousand teachers, and serving 550,000 pupils. Yet at the height of prosperity there were over six hundred portables in use, and it was still true that about one tenth of the school population was temporarily housed or attending school only half the day. For one reason or another, Chicago had turned a deaf ear to many progressive features that are found in other large cities in successful operation.

Allowing for some improved features of administration, such as the Bureau of Building Survey and the Curriculum Bureau, the three conclusions drawn at the end of the previous article could be repeated almost verbatim: The teachers' organizations were and are fighting, now with the board and now against it; the city authorities are seeking the means of controlling the board in violation of the Otis Law; and the superintendents are caught between the two powerful groups, at times quite obviously isolated from helpful contacts with either, and not infrequently at odds with both.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 139.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, Dec. 18, 1928, pp. 650, 651.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, Nov. 12, 1931, pp. 522-524.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, May 24, 1929, p. 1373.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, Nov. 13, 1929, p. 815.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 931.

<sup>29</sup>George D. Strayer, et al., *Report of Survey of the Schools of Chicago*, Vol. IV, pp. 102-116.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, Oct. 16, 1929, pp. 770, 771.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, March 14, 1928, pp. 955-978.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 8, 1928, p. 114.



# The Evolution of School Administration in Chicago

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In two preceding articles the administrative history of the Chicago public schools was briefly summarized for the period from 1890 to the present. The relations of the city authorities to school management were made clear. The present, concluding article, summarizes the important changes in administrative practice that have led to the present existing conditions in the Chicago school system.

Four definite lines of development in administrative organization and procedure stand out prominently in the history of the Chicago school system. These are: (1) the evolution from the district organization into a modern city school system; (2) acceptance of the principle of financial support of public schools from taxes levied on all the people; (3) transition from lay administration of the schools to professional administration; and (4) separation of the functions of *school* administration from those of *city* administration. No absolute dates can be set for these transitions, since in certain respects the lines of progress have been blurred by periods of reaction and regression. In fact, the evolution with respect to independence from municipal control and reliance upon professional administration cannot really be regarded as completely established in practice, even though accepted in principle.

Of the first two lines of evolution little need be said. District schools were established in the little city of Chicago in 1837, with district trustees to manage the schools. The office of trustee was abolished under a new charter in 1857, and the former board of inspectors was reconstituted as a board of education. Although the growing city of about 100,000 now had a city school system under the law, the board in effect continued to maintain the districts through committee administration. One member of the board was given charge of each school building until the number of buildings became too large to permit this; then each member of the board was given oversight of a group of buildings. In 1890 this system was abolished in favor of larger committees for the school districts, but in 1917 the district committees were also abolished. With the enactment of the Otis Law in 1917, Chicago had a true city system in fact as well as in law. Strong demands are still made for privileges and favors for sections of the city, but the board members are chosen at large, as in most other cities.

Chicago's legal and formal acceptance of the principle of free tax-supported schools

took place in 1839. There was considerable expansion of the school system prior to the close of the Civil War, and not a little doubt existed in the minds of friends of free education as to the willingness of the taxpayers to carry the burden of a school system which supported a free high school and employed a salaried superintendent of schools. However, right after the war Chicago experienced a very rapid growth in wealth and population, so that by the year 1890 the necessity of free tax-supported public schools was rarely questioned. From 1890 to 1917 the schools were operated on a cash basis, and the bonded debt was gradually retired. The "pay-as-you-go" policy was continued after the world war until 1932, when the depression and a local tax crisis seriously retarded the progress of the schools.

## Development of Professional Leadership

The third line of evolution, from lay to professional administration, is still in process and has been accompanied by many setbacks.

Until the appointment of a superintendent of schools in 1853, there was no real attempt, either in law or in practice, to provide any other administration than that which was furnished by nonspecialized citizens of the community. Trustees and inspectors engaged teachers, prescribed the rules of the schools and what the teachers should teach, and the city council managed the financial phases of the administration with due regard to the recommendations of the inspectors.

Chicago followed the example of other large cities in employing a superintendent, being one of twenty-six cities which took such action before the Civil War. For a long time after his appointment, the superintendent was merely an advisory officer, carrying out the rules and regulations under which school routine was precisely established, courses of study and textbooks were regulated, and teachers were employed, transferred, and promoted. Under the city ordinance establishing the office, the superintendent was subject to removal by the common council, but in the city charter of 1863 he was made subordinate only to the board of education. Although the first legal recognition of the position was contained in the charter of 1863, there was no extension of power and authority in this act over that granted by the original ordinance.

The first business official was appointed in 1863. From this year on expansion of

the professional staff was continuous, but in each case the duties and responsibilities of the new officers were carefully limited, and they were made subordinate to committees of the board in all their activities. The prevalent practice was to make them "helpers" and "advisers" to the members of the board, the members transacting the business of the schools for which they were held responsible by the public.

Slowly the committee system of administration broke down as the school system became too large to permit management of petty details by men busy in other lines of work. Very cautiously, the scope of the superintendent's duties was enlarged and his powers were increased, although with occasional movements in the opposite direction. Generally speaking, the delegation of authority to the superintendent depended upon the extent to which he made his recommendations and advice indispensable to the board. That is, he made himself an expert because of his grasp of the situation at issue, and because of his comprehensive city-wide point of view in contrast to the sectional views of the committees.

The evolution of the superintendency may be divided into four periods: (1) from 1854 to 1875, when the powers of the superintendent were almost nonexistent, while his influence and prestige in the administration of the schools constantly increased; (2) from 1875 to 1891, a period in which the rules and regulations tended to increase his authority to the extent that he became a recognized leader in administration of educational functions; (3) from 1891 to 1917, a 26-year interval marked by the emergence of a policy of separation of business and educational administration, and by a general tendency to increase the authority of the superintendent over teachers, textbooks, and courses of study; and (4) from 1917 to 1938, a period in which the superintendent was given statutory authority over a separate department of education, with an adequate term of office, and some assurance against political interference, so far as the law was concerned.

## Expansion of Superintendency

Expansion led also to the appointment of many assistants, district superintendents, and department heads. At first these officials were made responsible to committees of the board, and were appointed with or without the approval of the superintendent. Finally, however, they were made directly responsible to

<sup>1</sup>Emporia, Kansas.



the superintendent, and after 1917 they could not be appointed by the board without his consent. So long as the superintendent had no real authority to select the staff of his department, he could not be required to assume responsibility for their activities. Under the Otis Law he alone could be held responsible for the work of all those employed in his department, becoming the executive head of the school system so far as educational administration was concerned.

Finally, his department controls all principals and teachers in the schools of the city, on all levels of the school system. Long before the Otis Law was passed, the board found it necessary to safeguard the appointment of teachers by vesting this power in the superintendent. After 1917 the authority of the superintendent over the teaching staff became legally binding on the board itself, and once having ratified the lists of appointments, the board could not interfere.

Accompanying the development just described was a similar evolution in the management of the business affairs of the school system. In 1854, there was no distinction between the two departments. Members of the board of school inspectors, at first under close supervision of the common council, had made all business arrangements necessary to carrying on the work of the schools. They conceived of this as particularly their function. In fact, these duties were assigned to them by law.

When the city council passed an ordinance providing for a superintendent of schools, he was given business duties in connection with his educational duties. He was required to act as secretary to the board of inspectors, to make out all orders for labor and supplies, and to keep an inventory of supplies and equipment.

These business functions were not all-inclusive, since most of the business management was conducted by the city council and the board of inspectors. However, there was some indication that the intention was to unite the two functions under one management. The superintendent continued to act as secretary of the board until 1891, but in the meantime committees continued to transact most of the business of the board, and officials were appointed from time to time with direct responsibility to the committees.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century it began to appear that there was a decided lack of co-ordination between the various officials charged with the business functions, and several proposals were made for reorganization. There was some disagreement as to what should be done, but eventually it became customary for the president of the board to assume the general direction of business affairs. Apparently there was little or no disposition on the part of the superintendent to assume additional duties connected with business administration.

Since the president of the board was an *ex officio* member of all committees, it was assumed that he would be the natural executive to co-ordinate the work of committees, but since each year a new president might take charge, the plan did not work very well. There was soon a movement for reducing the number of standing committees, but even so, the management of business affairs became constantly a more difficult problem.

### The Business Management

The board elected a permanent secretary in 1894. The position of business manager was created in 1890, taking over some of the duties of the clerk and some of those of the finance committee. The business manager was in charge of the purchase of supplies, the supervision of engineers and janitors, payroll, and reception of bids. He acted as custodian of contracts.<sup>2</sup> Neither the secretary nor the business manager were in any sense subordinate to the superintendent of schools, yet neither was the head of a well-defined business department. The president of the board still assumed the functions of leadership in the management of business affairs. The secretary was not regarded as a member of the business department, but the tendency became strong to give him business responsibilities in the rules of the board.<sup>3</sup>

The Department of Administration which was established in 1910 was not intended to serve as a business department, but to centralize all functions not assigned to the superintendent under the authority of the secretary. The superintendent's function was somewhat overshadowed by that of the secretary under this plan, and remained so until the Otis Law was passed in 1917.

The recommendation of a special committee which in 1916 proposed that the superintendent be made the executive head of the entire system, was not followed in the Otis Law. Instead two co-ordinate departments were established, one under the business manager who thus exercised general supervision over the secretary's office, and the other under the superintendent of schools. The third department, the law department, is not to be regarded as co-ordinate with the others, even though the law itself makes no distinction between the three departments as to the degree of responsibility and authority of its executive officer.

The next and final step in the evolution of business administration would be the reorganization of the business department under the supervision of the superintendent of schools. This has been recommended on several occasions, and was one of the proposals given prominence in the Strayer survey of 1932. The principle involved is that, since there can be only one purpose in carrying out business functions,

and that is the contribution they can make to educational procedures, the whole school system should be under a single executive, an educational expert.

It is still true, in spite of all efforts to safeguard the superintendency, that the board of education is unwilling to delegate to the superintendent full authority to operate his own department, as required by law. In 1932 the Strayer survey disclosed that the superintendent was still being required to ask the authority of the board for many decisions that were purely professional matters, and of which the board itself could have had but little knowledge; for example, such matters as the transfer of teachers from one building to another, sabbatical leave for teachers, transfer of pupils from one building to another, etc.<sup>4</sup>

In the spring of 1936 newspapers charged without contradiction, that efforts were being made by various board members to run the schools and interfere with their administration. The inspectors of the North Central Association found teachers overloaded with classes, and for a time ten high schools were dropped from the accredited list, while eight were warned. Teachers throughout the school system were reported as working under the impression that the schools were being operated under the administration of board members rather than that of the superintendent.

Professional administrators have not had a fair chance to show what they can do for the school children of Chicago. The law is on their side, but the political machine, by its subtle methods of constant interference, and by appointment of some board members, continues to dominate in fact. This brings us to consideration of the fourth line of evolution, the partial (although supposedly complete) separation of *school* from *city* administration.

### Failure of Joint Control

Joint authority to control the city and the schools was given to the common council of Chicago by the charter of 1837, thus making the school system a city department. Gradually, however, the common council delegated the duties connected with school management to the board of school inspectors, and after twenty years of experience the charter of 1857 set up a separate board of education to control the school system.

Again we have an example of a principle established by law which was not carried out in practice.

The new board of education was the first of its kind set up in Chicago,<sup>5</sup> but it was legally no more independent of the common council than it had been under

<sup>4</sup>Strayer, et al., *Survey of the Schools of Chicago*, Vol. I, pp. 11-16.

<sup>5</sup>S. E. Sparling, *Municipal History and Present Organization of Chicago*, p. 46. "The first significant use of the board type of administration was the creation of the board of education in 1857."

<sup>2</sup>*Proceedings, Board of Education, 1890-1891*, p. 414.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 1901-1902, p. 515.



a different name. One section of the law stated that the duties of the board should be the same as before, or as they might be prescribed by the laws and ordinances of the city. Furthermore, the members of the board were to be appointed by the common council. Although the council interfered very little with the internal management of the school routine, the selection of teachers, and similar functions, it retained absolute control of the financing of the schools, and to all intents and purposes the school system remained a department of the city government, only partially autonomous.

The charter of 1863 more definitely established the right of the board to manage the schools, by taking away the right of the council to remove the superintendent of schools. The charter of 1865 gave jurisdiction over the school fund and over the school agent to the board, a minor move toward the assumption by the board of responsibility for school finances.

The appointment of board members was taken from the hands of the city council by the law of 1872, and turned over to the mayor of the city. This tended to increase the degree of separation from city affairs to some extent, but the city council was required to ratify all appointments. The board was also given authority to manage its own property through the laws of the state instead of through municipal ordinances. Nominally, at least, the board became a state agency, but the city council still decided on annual appropriations for the support of the schools, often reducing the estimates prepared by the board.

The law of 1872 was clarified in 1889, providing for the exercise of certain powers concurrently with the city council, and for certain others exclusively. That this law, in practice, however, failed to achieve the separation that was desired by the board, is indicated by the comment of the president of the board, soon after the law became effective:

In the matter of concurrence by the city council in any action by the board for which such concurrence is required, the inconsistency heretofore prevailing has been allowed to continue. It has been curiously assumed that the "appropriation" by the city council each year of an aggregate sum specifically "for the purchase of grounds, furniture, erection of new buildings, repair and renting of buildings and support of schools" constitutes an advanced concurrence in expenditures for the purchase of school sites and the erection of new buildings, so that it has been customary to proceed without reference to the council in making repairs, and to apply for concurrence to the council every time it was desired to purchase a school site

or erect a school building. The bare statement of this condition is enough to show its unreasonableness. If the appropriation is a sufficient concurrence for repairs, it is likewise a sufficient concurrence for the purchase of school sites and the erection of school buildings; and if it is not a sufficient concurrence for the latter, neither is it for the former.<sup>8</sup>

The law of 1909 failed to remedy these conditions, and contributed nothing to the further separation of city and school administration. The confusion between city and board authority was allowed to continue until adoption of the Otis Law in 1917.

#### State Priority in Chicago

Under the Otis Law the board was finally established as a "body politic and corporate," independent of the city council and in charge of its own finances. Taxes were still to be levied by the city council but, so far as schools were concerned, only at the demand of and under direction of the board of education. Although the mayor appoints members of the board, he may not interfere with them in any way during their terms of office, nor can he interfere legally with the action of the board as a whole. The city council must still ratify appointments made by the mayor, but cannot reject a budget adopted by the board.

Thus complete separation of city and school administration was gradually brought about over a period of about eighty years, just as a similar evolution took place in many other cities in the United States. In any issue which raises the point, state authority takes precedence over city authority.

Unfortunately, this priority of the state over the city has never been recognized in Chicago. Tradition is all against it, and in this case tradition still dominates.

Chicago has had ten superintendents since 1891, the average length of service being about four and one-half years. This sounds more like the experience of a small town in a rural section than like what should be the record of a large city. Constant changes have resulted in entire absence of any continuity or consistency of educational policy. Superintendents have been so hampered by constant political interference from the city hall that they have been unable to make any educational progress which secured permanent improvement throughout the system.

McAndrew fought to free the schools from interference, but was forced out by the most ridiculous and farcical procedure that one could imagine. Ella Flagg Young, Charles E. Chadsey, and William J. Bogan fought the same fight, but the first two were forced out for political reasons, and the third died in office. Through many administrations teachers and principals have carried on, but they have not looked with much hope toward leadership from the administrative heads of the school system.

Chicago's occasional reform administrations seemed incapable of accomplishing any permanent results. A member of the political organization of one of the parties told the writer that the people of Chicago wanted a local man for superintendent and were opposed to outsiders, but it would seem more accurate to assert that the politicians wanted a local man. However this may be, it is at least obvious that no superintendent selected from outside the city was ever able to stay more than a few uncomfortable years in his position; witness Andrews, Cooley, Chadsey, and McAndrew. What the people of Chicago want is still an open question. If a local man is wanted, he should be given a free hand, but there seems to be little chance that he will get it.

Recent developments are not encouraging. At the time that Superintendent Bogan's successor was announced, one Chicago newspaper inquired whether the new superintendent, like all his predecessors, would be "sacrificed on the unholy altar of spoils politics." When it was announced recently that the high schools of Chicago would be reorganized on an 80-per-cent vocational basis, the chief reason for such a change was questioned. It remains to be seen whether these questions can be substantiated, but their constant reiteration by friends of education in Chicago does not speak well for the future.

In 1929 the principal of one of the largest high schools in Chicago told the writer that so far as he was concerned, he proposed to have as little as possible to do with the administration of the schools, what he called "the downtown gang." He implied that other principals felt the same way. If allowed to continue and develop, such sentiments cannot fail to be destructive of educational advancement. The only answer is an aroused public sentiment that will insist on a complete separation of city and school administration, and that will uphold the intent of the law by giving the superintendent an unhampered control over the activities of the educational department of the Chicago schools.

<sup>8</sup>Annual Report, Board of Education, 1889-90, p. 21.











